



Information **UPDATE**

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction/Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent/P.O. Box 7841/ Madison, WI 53707-7841

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TO: District Administrators, CESA Administrators, CCDEB Administrators,
Directors of Special Education and Pupil Services, and Other Interested Parties

FROM: Carolyn Stanford Taylor, Assistant State Superintendent
Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Complying with the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for
Students with Disabilities—Part 4

This bulletin is the fourth in a series of bulletins describing the guidelines for complying with the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities (WAA). The first bulletin (Information Update No. 02.03) described the WAA Participation Checklist. This checklist is a required document to be used by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams when making decisions about a student's participation in the WAA. The second bulletin (No. 02.07) described the WAA Rating Scale. The third bulletin (No. 03.04) clarified the changes made to the WAA Rating Scale for the 2003-04 school year. This bulletin explains the reporting of WAA for students with disabilities performance scores for determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for a school building or school district.

Upon determination by the IEP team that the student will participate in statewide assessment through the WAA for students with disabilities, the WAA will be completed by an individual or individuals who have knowledge of the student's IEP goals, objectives or benchmarks, educational curriculum, knowledge and skills. Assessments will be completed during the months of September, October, and November until the close of the testing window or when testing has been completed in the school district.

The WAA is part of the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) and is designed to assess the educational performance of students with disabilities who cannot meaningfully participate in the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) even with accommodations. The WAA for students with disabilities focuses on the knowledge and skills that are aligned with Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. These knowledge and skills are considered to be prerequisite to the majority of content assessed by the WKCE. All students with disabilities who participate in the WAA for students with disabilities are counted for participation and contribute to the 95% participation requirement in No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

In May 2003, the U.S. Department of Education re-issued a proposed rule on "Accountability for Children with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities." This was followed in June 2003 with a letter from Rod Paige, Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education, in which he authorized states to implement the proposed regulation. In preparation for this change, cut scores were established

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for the WAA this summer. They are now being used to determine a student's overall level of performance in each of the five content areas. These changes were designed to demonstrate which students are "Not Yet Proficient" in prerequisite skills and which are "Proficient" in prerequisite skills. As a result of this standards setting activity, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction will implement the proposed rule for the 2003-04 school year.

The proposed rule allows states that use an alternate assessment that is aligned with state academic content standards to incorporate scores of students participating in WAA for students with disabilities who obtain a Prerequisite Skill (PS) Proficient (PS Level 3) or a PS Advanced (PS Level 4) in their AYP calculations. A district or school may use up to one percent of all Full Academic Year (FAY) students in the grades assessed for this calculation if they perform at PS Proficient or Advanced.

In 2002-03, any FAY student in the students with disabilities group with a cell size of 50 who took the WAA for students with disabilities was counted as "not proficient." As a consequence, prior to this school year, all students with disabilities participating in the WAA for students with disabilities were part of the district's denominator. No students were counted in the numerator.

Beginning with the 2003-04 AYP determination, if students take the WAA and obtain a PS Proficient (PS Level 3) or a PS Advanced (PS Level 4) score, schools will be able to count as "proficient" on prerequisite skills up to one percent of their FAY students. Guidance from the Office of Special Education suggests that about two percent of the total population will need an alternate assessment. If a district had 200 FAY students in the tested grades, they may have four students taking the WAA based on an IEP Team decision. Two of those students, if they achieved a PS Proficient (PS Level 3) or a PS Advanced (PS Level 4) score on the WAA, could be counted in AYP.

The WAA Participation Checklist, the updated WAA Rating Scale, the updated WAA PowerPoint Presentation, and an updated Frequently Asked Questions document are available on our website at: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/een/assmt-waa.html>.

Questions regarding this bulletin may be directed to the Special Education Team at (608) 266-1781.

This information update can also be accessed through the Internet at:
<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/een/bulindex.html>

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